

# Fisher Harvest 2004

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## **Abstract**

Wisconsin trappers registered 1,560 fisher during the 2004 season, including 1,173 taken with DNR issued permits, 305 taken off reservation by native trappers, 9 taken on reservations, and 73 taken incidentally. The harvest consisted of 852 males, 664 females, and 44 unknowns. The five leading counties of harvest were Washburn (122), Burnett (120), Oneida (113), Rusk (112), and Sawyer (101) counties.

## **Background**

Dhuey, et al. (2004) described the results of the 2003 fisher trapping season. Kohn et.al. (1994) described the events leading up to the establishment of Wisconsin's first fisher trapping season in 1985 and summarized fisher harvests and regulations through 1992. Basically the fisher trapping season was lengthened, numbers of harvest permits increased, and the area open to fisher trapping expanded as the fisher population continued to grow rapidly.

Wisconsin is now divided into 6 Fisher Management Zones (FMZ) which are clusters of deer management units containing similar densities of fisher (Fig. 1). FMZ E was open to fisher trapping for the first time for the 2000 season and FMZ F was opened to fisher harvest in 2004. Currently all FMZ in Wisconsin are open to regulated trapping. Fisher harvest goals are set annually for each FMZ based upon population size in relation to management goals. The numbers of harvest permits issued are based on the highest trapper success rates during the previous three years in those zones. Negotiated amounts of the harvest in each zone within the ceded territory are allotted to Native American (Chippewa) trappers. The current FMZ's were expanded and new zones were added in 1996. The 2004 fisher season was the eighth under the expanded zone framework, the fifth time that trapping has been allowed in FMZ E, and the first trapping season in FMZ F.

## **Methods**

Non-Chippewa trappers were required to apply for fisher harvest permits by 10 September, and designate which management zone they would like to trap. The application fee for a fisher permit is \$3.00, (included in the Patron license fee), with successful applicants selected at random.

Trappers were required to register all fishers with DNR personnel. The date and area (county and deer management unit) of kill, sex of the animal, type of trap used, and the trapper's name and address were recorded for each fisher registered. Similar information from the off-reservation Chippewa harvest was compiled by Jon Gilbert of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, and provided to the DNR for use in this report. These data were entered into the DNR UNIX computer by field personnel and summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

## **Results**

The 2004 Fisher season ran from 1 November-31 December for non-Chippewa trappers and from 1 November 2004 - 31 March 2005 for Chippewa trappers. A total of 6,044 regular harvest permits were issued to 7,053 applicants (Table 1). The number of permits available for the 2004 season was more than in 2003 when 5,654 applicants were issued 3,264 permits. A tribal harvest declaration of 427 fisher was agreed to for off-reservation treaty harvest.

During the 2004, 1,560 fisher were registered with the state. These included 1,173 fisher harvested with state issued permits, 305 fisher taken off-reservation by Chippewa trappers (Table 2; Jonathan Gilbert, personal comm.), and 9 fisher taken on the Menominee reservation in Wisconsin. Some Native Americans have been registering on reservation kills with DNR personnel. Also, 73 fisher were registered as incidental take fisher. These are fisher that were either trapped incidental to other trapping activities, found dead, or a road kill, and are included in the statewide totals. Trapper success averaged 19% statewide in 2004; lower than the 2003 success rate of 30%.

Most fisher (458) were trapped in FMZ A, followed by FMZ B (401), FMZ D (348), FMZ C (276), FMZ E (47) and FMZ F (30) (Table 3, Fig. 1). Fisher harvests were highest in Washburn (122), Burnett (120), Oneida (113), Rusk (112), and Sawyer (101) counties (Table 4, Fig.2), and in Deer Management Units 17 (87), 11 (75), 18 (72), 13 (69), and 15 (58) (Table 5, Fig. 3). Males comprised 55% of the harvest, while females made up 43%. Sex was not recorded for 44 of the fisher harvested.

The silkier fur of female fisher, normally half the size of the male, used to bring a higher price. International marketing and changes in fur use has now balanced fur values between male and female. The average price for all fisher pelts was \$26.91 in 2004, and ranged from \$18 to \$30. This was a decrease over last year's price of \$28.25.

In 2004, 61% of the fishers were caught in body-gripping traps and 18% in foothold traps and 1% in live traps. Last year, 78% of the fisher harvested were captured with conibear traps and 20% were trapped with foothold traps.

The 2004 fisher harvest of 1,560 was higher than in 2003 (1,126) and below the harvest goal of 2,055. Light and frequent snow fall in December may have increased trappers ability to locate and pursue fisher. The snow probably did not hinder trapper's access to fisher. Fisher populations remain at or above our population goals in many of the FMZ (see "Fisher Population Analyses 2005).

The WDNR Furbearer Advisory Committee has recommended a statewide harvest goal of 2,600 fisher in the 2005 season. Harvest goals by zone are: FMZ A, 800; FMZ B, 600; FMZ C, 550; FMZ D, 550; FMZ E, 50, and FMZ F 50.

## **Literature Cited**

Kohn, B.E., N.F. Payne, J.E. Ashbrenner, W.A. Creed. 1993. The Fisher in Wisconsin. Wis. Dep. Nat. Resour. Tech. Bull. 24pp.

Dhuey B. J. Olson and A. Roth. 2004. Fisher Harvest, 2003. IN: The Wisconsin Wildlife Surveys Report, August 2004. Document on file at the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, Bureau of Research, Monona, WI 53716

**Table 1.** *Numbers of state issued fisher trapping permits, number of fisher trapped, harvest quota, and permit success for the 2004 season.*

Zone	State Issued Permits	State Applicants	State Tags/ Applicant	State Fisher Trapped	State Harvest Goal	State Permit Success
A	1,073	1,366	0.79	303	425	28.2%
B	1,134	2,035	0.56	243	345	21.4%
C	1,335	1,196	1.12	248	390	18.6%
D	2,111	1,421	1.49	324	390	15.3%
E	219	640	0.34	35	38	16.0%
F	172	395	0.44	20	40	11.6%
Total	6,044	7,053	0.86	1,173	1,628	19.4%

**Table 2.** *The 2004 Tribal off-reservation treaty fisher harvest.*

Zone	Tribal Harvest Allocation	Sex			Total Trapped
		Male	Female	Unknown	
A	200	75	65	1	141
B	130	73	56	1	130
C	35	9	10	0	19
D	60	5	3	1	9
E	2	2	1	1	4
F	0	2	0	0	2
Total	427	166	135	4	305

**Table 3.** *The 2004 (Non-Tribal, Tribal ceded territory, Tribal reservation, and Incidental) fisher harvest.*

Zone	Non-Tribal Harvest	Tribal Ceded Territory Harvest	Tribal Reservation Harvest	Incidental Harvest	Total Harvest
A	303	141	0	14	458
B	243	130	0	28	401
C	248	19	0	9	276
D	324	9	9	6	348
E	35	4	0	8	47
F	20	2		8	30
Total	1,173	305	9	73	1,560

**Table 4.** *The 2004 fisher harvest by county and sex.*

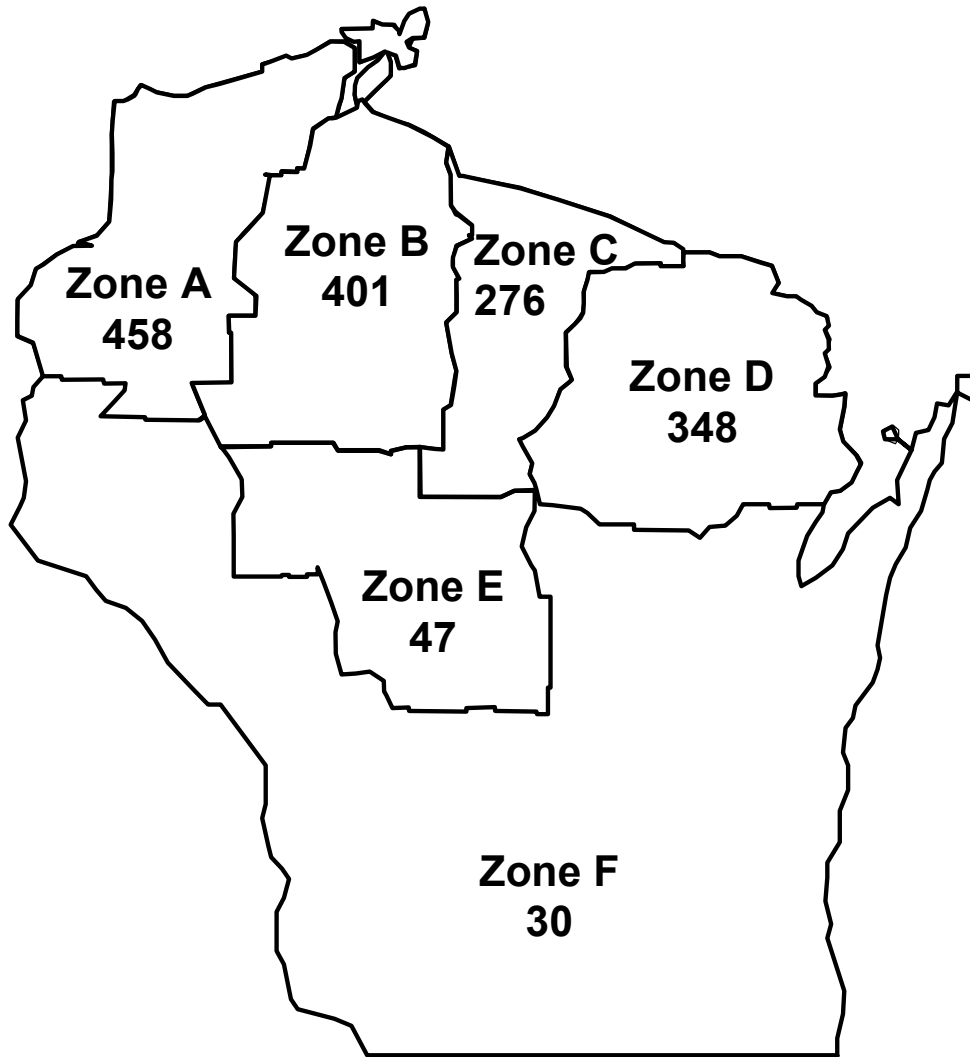
County	Male	Female	Unk	Total*	County	Male	Female	Unk	Total*
Ashland	11	5	0	16	Monroe	1	0	3	4
Barron	14	16	0	30	Oconto	19	17	0	36
Bayfield	23	27	1	51	Oneida	50	63	0	113
Brown	0	1	0	1	Pierce	0	1	0	1
Burnett	58	59	3	120	Polk	30	33	0	63
Chippewa	27	23	1	51	Portage	4	2	1	7
Clark	1	4	2	7	Price	37	19	14	70
Douglas	33	18	4	55	Rusk	60	51	1	112
Dunn	1	2	0	3	Sawyer	62	38	1	101
Eau Claire	2	5	0	7	Shawano	11	13	0	24
Florence	18	6	0	24	Taylor	37	34	0	71
Forest	38	17	1	56	Vilas	30	36	1	67
Iron	22	3	0	25	Washburn	68	51	3	122
Jackson	2	1	1	4	Waukesha	1	0	0	1
Juneau	1	2	0	3	Waupaca	5	1	0	6
Langlade	41	28	0	69	Waushara	0	0	1	1
Lincoln	45	29	1	75	Wood	6	3	0	9
Marathon	49	24	3	76	Unknown	17	11	0	28
Marinette	25	16	1	42					
Menominee	3	5	1	9	<b>Total</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1,560</b>

\* Includes tribal and incidentally taken fisher.

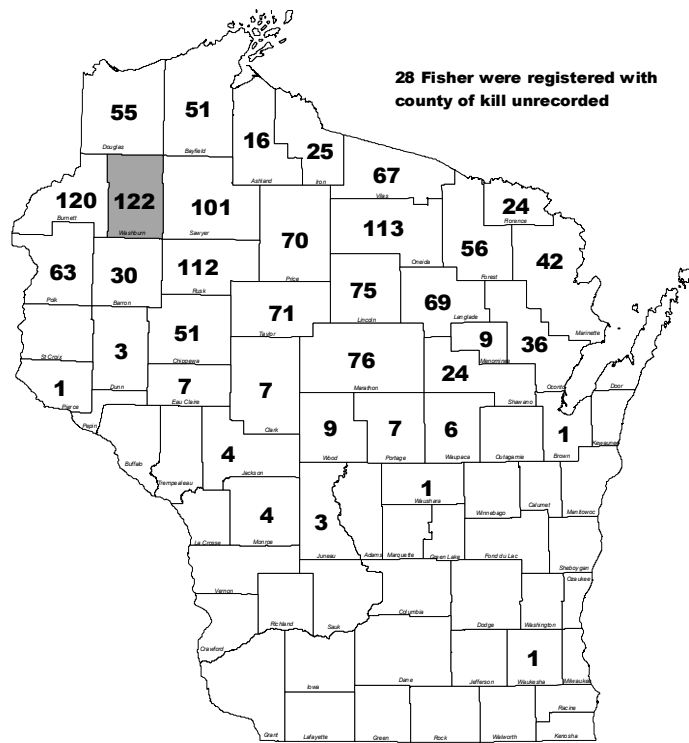
**Table 5.** *The 2004 fisher harvest by deer management unit and sex.*

Unit	Male	Female	Unk	Total*	Unit	Male	Female	Unk	Total*
01	3	3	1	7	37	15	21	0	36
01M	2	0	0	2	38	15	20	1	36
02	11	3	1	15	39	7	3	0	10
03	14	20	1	35	40	15	2	0	17
04	5	7	0	12	41	3	2	1	6
05	0	3	0	3	42	28	7	0	35
06	9	3	0	12	43	16	19	0	35
07	2	0	0	2	44	21	20	0	41
08	16	7	2	25	45	16	6	0	22
09	7	3	0	10	46	32	14	1	47
10	15	19	0	34	47	12	12	0	24
11	41	31	3	75	48	3	5	1	9
12	13	5	0	18	49A	8	9	0	17
13	43	25	1	69	49B	9	8	0	17
14	4	2	0	6	50	9	4	0	13
15	28	30	0	58	51A	5	3	0	8
16	20	24	1	45	51B	5	3	0	8
17	44	41	2	87	52	18	14	1	33
18	36	36	0	72	53	1	3	0	4
19	12	10	0	22	54A	0	0	1	1
20	14	4	14	32	55	3	2	1	6
22	11	10	0	21	56	6	3	4	13
22A	2	2	0	4	57	1	1	0	2
23	31	25	1	57	57A	2	0	0	2
24	15	10	1	26	57B	1	0	0	1
25	13	7	0	20	57C	1	1	0	2
26	21	14	0	35	58	1	5	1	7
27	1	2	0	3	59A	3	5	0	8
28	19	5	0	24	59C	0	0	1	1
29A	6	1	0	7	60A	0	1	0	1
29B	9	5	1	15	62A	5	1	2	8
30	10	4	0	14	62B	5	4	0	9
31	9	10	0	19	63B	1	0	0	1
32	27	26	0	53	64M	0	1	0	1
33	19	17	0	36	65B	2	1	0	3
34	6	4	0	10	77C	1	0	0	1
35	11	10	0	21	Unk	11	10	0	21
36	22	26	0	48	<b>Total</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1,560</b>

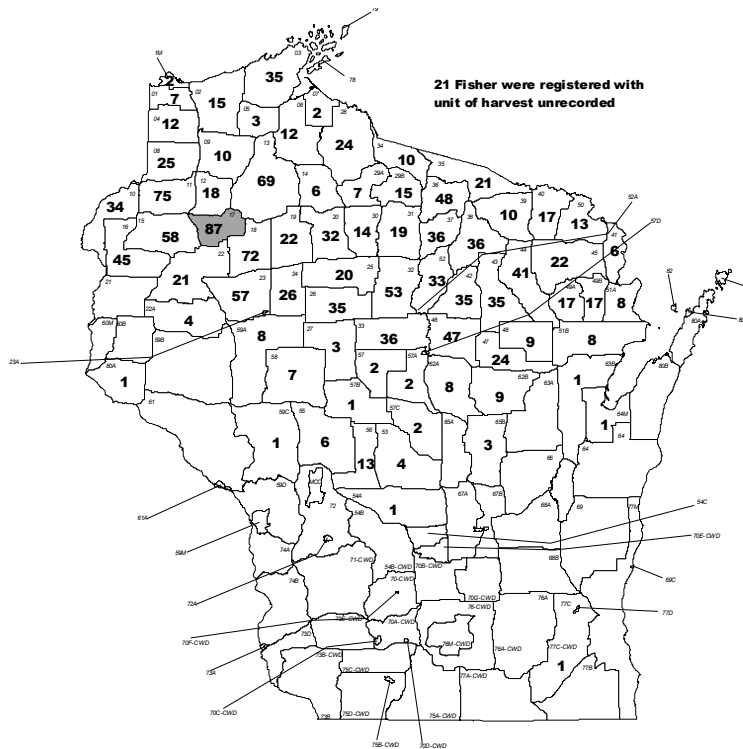
\* Includes tribal and incidentally taken fisher.



**Figure 1.** *The 2004 fisher harvest by management zone.*



**Figure 2.** The 2004 fisher harvest by county (shaded county is county of highest harvest).



**Figure 3.** The 2004 fisher harvest by deer management unit (shaded unit is unit of highest harvest).